

AF15

596
182 socially and legally sanctioned as means of providing sons, if marriage produced only daughters or no children at all. Because of the necessity of providing against a high death rate, the premium on sons resulted in over-population, only partly offset by a high rate of female infanticide.

554
596 Just as sex, age, and generation determined an individual's status within the family, so did these factors determine his behavior and position in the community and the world at large. An additional determinant of his standing was the status of his family in society.

596
562 Authority and dominance were the province of males. Women might exercise overt leadership, and occasionally did so. More frequently, they were the power behind the throne. Such cases were exceptional, however. In modern times at least, supremacy was neither desired by women nor readily admitted to when possessed.

888 Age was honored relatively and absolutely. Long life automatically gave its possessor higher standing in the community, but whatever age he attained, he was to show respect to his elders and members of an older generation. In the society of traditional China age implied the accumulation of wisdom and experience vital to society in times of decision or crisis.

596
178 tended to have a moderating influence on
paternalistic authoritarianism.

596
562 The family in the rural areas adjacent to
industrialized cities was also affected in other
ways. Men of advanced years, particularly
if they had a classical education or held
official position, continued to be honored.
However, their position of influence and
authority was challenged by younger men with
the personal qualities of dynamic leadership
and success. Ancestor worship continued to
give a greater primacy to males in the family
but the ability of daughters to earn a wage
enhanced their value to the family and made
their early marriage into another family
less desirable. It should be noted, however,
that women of farming and laboring families
worked outside of the home only out of sheer
economic necessity. Neither sex approved of
female employment in the factory. Whenever
possible, it was avoided or terminated.
Among upper-class families, women with modern
education began gradually to seek employment
in the professions and to regard such work
as a means of establishing permanent personal
and economic independence.

594 The independent family in the modern
city was most subject to change. Though

AF15

668
462 For instance, an article in the Peking
Chung-kuo ch'ing-nien pao [China Youth] on
the correct attitude toward parents, asserts
that under the Confucian system with its emphases
on filial piety, parents had the right to regard
their children as private property and demand
sacrifices of them. Under the new regime, the
article pointed out, "children are not the private
property of their parents, but belong first of
all to the state and to the people, and... the
interests of the people should be the highest
criterion governing our actions toward our
parents."¹³

562
668 An editorial in the People's Daily in
March 1955 notes that remnant feudal ideologies
still obstructed "the participation of women in
Socialist construction and various political
activities." The editorial then goes on to state
that it is in order to promote the political and
production zeal of women that their rights must
be promoted and protected and the Marriage Law
implemented.¹⁴ Various comments on the
Marriage Law inspired by the regime stress
Lenin's dictum that sex relationships and family
problems are not individual or small affairs but
matters of great social, economic, and political
significance.

13. S.C.M.P., 973, p. 31.

14. Ibid., 106, p. 15.

184
441 An additional factor to provoke dissatis-
faction among the merchants is the control on
foreign trade. Merchants in East China sea-
ports, who have had the advantage of monopoliz-
ing a large portion of the nation's foreign trade,
have been deprived of this opportunity because
virtually all foreign trade is now handled by the
government. Their role has been reduced to
that of conducting limited export transactions
supervised by the government, and there is no
hope that they may be allowed to import Western
manufactured goods.

V. WOMEN

- 562
184 The customary position of women in China
is subordinate to that of men. This tradition was
so deep-rooted that it took superhuman courage
for the first women to claim their "right"; and
the pain of "emancipation" continues under the
Communists.

To the "emancipated" belongs responsibility;
this is at least theoretically true, and the Chinese
women who have exchanged one form of drudgery
for another are generally expected to have a
degree of political consciousness similar to that
of men of equal education and comparable environ-
ment. In many cases women prove to be even
more "patriotic" than men as a result of the un-
precedented government effort to show the women
that they, too, can achieve enviable social
recognition by a show of "patriotism."

- 562
184 How much improvement in the status of the women has been brought about by the Communists?

Women are encouraged to participate in political activities; more tangibly and closer to their daily life, they are given child care, adult education, and other welfare benefits if they join the working force. If the increase in the number of women workers in factories can be taken as an indication of the women's own free choice, then women in Communist China may indeed feel favorably disposed toward the Communist regime. But upon closer observation their entry into factory work may have been out of financial necessity rather than free choice.

The much-publicized marriage law in Communist China embodies nothing new, but its vigorous and often arbitrary enforcement is unprecedented. Even this Communist law, seemingly for the benefit of women, has engendered mixed feelings. Acceptance of this law will mean the destruction of some of the most stubborn traditions in China (See discussion of the marriage law in the chapter on The Family).

Some women hold high posts in government, and there are "labor heroines" in all industries. Housewives in larger cities manage to live in leisure if they belong to the high income group. Younger housewives in families of modest income may have to work outside the home, but there is no indication that they resent it. The age-group differential asserts itself in the reaction of

- 562 women to the new regime; older women who had
184 learned to live in peace with the extended family system are likely to dread the Communist effort to reduce the extended family to the conjugal family; younger women are more apt to feel favorably disposed toward the Peking regime.

A sharp difference in attitude is to be observed between the women in Kiangsu (particularly in such larger cities as Shanghai and Nanking) and those in the more remote districts in Fukien. City life had caused changes in attitudes among women in Shanghai even before the Communists announced their policy with regard to women and their status in society. Most of the women in western Fukien villages remain more strictly tradition-bound and are less prepared to accept the ideas introduced by the Peking government.

VI. NATIONAL MINORITIES

- 563
184 A larger degree of assimilation of minority nationalities is observed in East China than in Southwest or Central-South China. Hence there are fewer distinguishing features of the attitudes of minority nationalities in this region. Generally speaking, the minority groups in China have never felt any great loyalty toward the larger political entity of China. The Communist policy is to cultivate a feeling of kinship between these groups and the Han-Chinese. To substantiate this policy, the government has been trying to develop for